

SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS

Services essential to the delivery of a safe and high quality supply of water will be provided under the highest standards of efficiency and fairness once a commitment is made, and the obligation is assumed, to serve any retail or wholesale customer.

Philosophy

As a regional water utility, SWD provides a reliable supply of drinking water to a growing population, as well as water supply for domestic uses and fire protection. Decisions affecting service to customers will be guided by the recognition that a water utility is a sole provider of a basic human necessity. The obligation of the department to assure that service is provided to existing retail and wholesale customers before extending service to any new customers will guide decisions about approval of new services or improvements to existing services. This service level assures each customer a reliable and sufficient supply of water that meets or exceeds all quality regulations and is delivered at standard pressure for use at the customer tap.

The department will provide service to all customers in accordance with the highest standards of efficiency, humanity and fairness and subject to provisions and requirements of any applicable federal, state or local regulations on growth management, resource management, environmental protection, etc.

This commitment to provide service applies to the department's retail and wholesale customers. Retail customers are those residential, commercial and fire service customers directly served by SWD. The department also serves 27 water purveyors which have signed long-term contracts (plus two that have not). These contracts create a structured relationship between the department and each wholesale customer and establish a variety of obligations and commitments for each party. The department acknowledges these commitments and will honor the contract provisions.

New wholesale customers are those water providers who have asked or may in the future ask for wholesale service from the Seattle water system. Service to these customers will require development of contracts between them and the City and may be subject to a variety of conditions including, but not limited to, off-peak service only or total volume restrictions. In the event the wholesale service area is expanded to provide either firm or conditional service to new wholesale customers, the department would also apply this policy, and all other applicable policies included in the WSP, to these new customers.

Policy Implementation Guidelines

Guidelines for retail, existing and any new wholesale customers:

- (1) In the event of a water shortage, the department will give first priority to meeting health, safety and human consumption requirements. Reductions will be expected from all customer groups.
- (2) In making decisions about extending service, the department will consider direction provided by the Planning and Service Area Policy, and any applicable water right boundary constraints. It will specifically evaluate the impacts of providing or not providing service including any emergency or hardship conditions.

- (3) Service will be provided in accordance with the highest standards of efficiency, humanity and fairness and will be subject to provisions and requirements of any applicable federal, state or local regulations on growth management, resource management, environmental protection, etc.

Guidelines for retail customers

Commitments to serve new retail customers will consider the following factors:

- (1) Evaluation of the availability of resources and facilities needed to provide adequate service; and
- (2) Ability of the local service provider to provide adequate service. In cases where service cannot be provided, cooperative agreements may be made between jurisdictions in the interest of providing the best possible service to the customer.

Guidelines for existing wholesale customers

- (1) In order to assure that a reliable and high-quality supply of water is available to meet future water needs, the department is committed to developing and implementing the necessary long-range plans, programs and facility development and rehabilitation projects in consultation and cooperation with its existing wholesale customers. To effectively conduct these activities, it is the department's intent to obtain from existing wholesale customers, as provided by the provisions of its contract, accurate and timely information on:
 - (a) existing and projected water use levels;
 - (b) major changes in future water needs arising from, for example, large new developments allowed under changing land use plans;
 - (c) proposed service area boundary changes;
 - (d) comprehensive plans for wholesale service areas including any significant amendments to such plans; and
 - (e) agreements to supply to or purchase water from other entities.
- (2) The department will provide each of its wholesale customers with information on the projections and service area assumptions used in preparing the regional comprehensive plan and will work to resolve any questions or problems about this information with the affected jurisdictions. The department will compare information provided to it by wholesale customers to that used in preparing the regional comprehensive plan and will notify any wholesale customer of any significant discrepancies.
- (3) The department will, in cooperation with the Purveyor Committee, review information provided by wholesale customers to identify any implications of changes in planned growth rates, service areas, or use of alternative water supplies on the department's or any individual wholesale customer's facility plans, or conservation or other programs. The product of this review will be a recommendation for any changes to the department's facility plans, or conservation or other programs. The department will consider these recommendations in preparing its annual budgets and in updating its capital improvement program. The reviewers will also make recommendations requesting any individual purveyor to reevaluate and resubmit information for committee review.

Guidelines for potential new wholesale customers:

- (1) The obligation to continue dependable service to existing retail and wholesale customers precedes an obligation to serve new wholesale customers. Before making a commitment to serve new wholesale customers, the department will evaluate whether the requested service can be provided under the department's water rights and without adversely impacting existing customers. Service will not be extended if any significant regulatory constraints or other adverse impacts cannot be resolved in a timely and acceptable manner. Service to new wholesale customers requires a recommendation by the Mayor and approval of the City Council.
- (2) Jurisdictions requesting service must:
 - (a) be a municipality, water district, community or private water association with an approved comprehensive plan for providing water service to the area proposed for new service;
 - (b) have participated in the development of an approved regional water plan by providing information about existing and projected demand and service area;
 - (c) agree to work with the department to identify resources and facilities necessary to provide service and to develop a plan and time frame for initiating service that takes into account lead time needed to acquire resources and finance and construct facilities;
 - (d) agree to bear the costs of any dedicated facilities required to provide service to the requesting jurisdiction;
 - (e) agree to bear a share of the cost that is proportional to benefits received of any regional facility required to provide service;
 - (f) agree to support and fully participate in the regional water conservation program and any other water conservation programs required by the City of Seattle; and
 - (g) execute a contract with SWD that is acceptable to the city as well as to existing wholesale customers.

Guidelines for off-peak service to retail, or existing or new wholesale customers

- (1) Consider extending off-peak service during the months of November through May when all of the following conditions can be met:
 - (a) off-peak service does not negatively impact service to existing retail or wholesale customers;
 - (b) off-peak service increases efficiency of resource use, system uses or accomplishes other regional goals;
 - (c) the customer or utility receiving off-peak service covers the cost of any system improvements or operations needed to provide service;
 - (d) off-peak service is compatible with adopted land use plans, and any other applicable local, state or federal laws or regulations; and
 - (e) service does not affect the department's ability to respond to droughts or other emergency conditions.
- (2) The department shall not deliver off-peak water service unless normal instream flow requirements on the department's surface water supplies are being met.

- (3) The department shall not deliver off-peak water service if service would reduce the availability of water supply to meet instream flow requirements or municipal and industrial needs during peak demand periods.